

Lucille, Sweep Out Padded Cell, 31964

By Goldberg



Automobile Tendency Toward Higher Prices

A general survey of the tendencies and design of the automobile is made in the November 15 issue of the *Horizon*, a magazine of the Automobile Age, accompanied by complete specifications of all of the passenger cars and commercial vehicles announced for the 1917 market. Last year, it will be remembered, says this automobile trade magazine, the outstanding feature of the season's announcements was a wholesale reduction in prices, which brought with it a large increase in the number of models in the lower price classes and a corresponding decrease in the higher classes. This movement has not only entirely ceased, but the price pendulum has even begun to swing the other way. While the lowest price class has not been affected, it will be observed that there has been a marked reduction in the number of models in the class next to the lowest, from 22 to 17.2 per cent. The loss of this class is more than equaled by gains of the three classes next above. There are, therefore, many more models now being listed at between \$1,000 and \$2,000 than there were last year.

Remains the Same. The \$2,000-\$3,000 class remains substantially the same, while in the highest priced class, above \$3,000, there is a further marked decline. The market is evidently still gravitating from the higher toward the moderate priced classes and the pressure of the demand has enabled manufacturers of moderate priced cars to raise their price somewhat, the constant advance in the price of nearly all materials and the scarcity of labor affording excellent reasons for the step.

It is interesting to study developments in regard to cylinder numbers. First, it will be seen that the six-cylinder type is still holding its own, for while its percentage is slightly lower than for 1915, it is higher than for 1916. The sum total of the percentages of eight and ten cylinder models is exactly the same as it was last year, and the same of the cylinder class has been wholly at the expense of the four.

Cylinders Smaller. The trend toward smaller cylinders still continues. Thus practically 50 per

cent of all the engines now have a cylinder bore of less than 3.5 inches, while last year the percentage was only 37.3 and the previous year only 30.8. This is partly explained by the gain of the six-cylinder over the four-cylinder model, and—if we follow the development over a number of years back—by the appearance of eight and twelve-cylinder engines. On the other hand, it is in no small measure due to the advent of the high speed engine. Small bore engines are desirable on account of their smoother operation, and small engines offer advantages in the way of reduction in total car weight, fuel economy, tire economy and tax rates.

Lighting and Starting. Lighting and starting systems comprising two units, working at a pressure of six volts and with ground-return wiring are largely in the majority. There has been a remarkable increase in the representation of two-unit systems during the past year, which is probably accounted for by the fact that the principal maker of single unit systems added a two-unit design, and another very prominent maker who formerly made both types, gave up the single unit system, or at least ceased to push it. Four carburetor manufacturers now divide between them about 75 per cent of the carburetor contracts for pleasure cars. The number of car manufacturers using carburetors of their own make has decreased further. Battery ignition has nearly doubled its

representation during the year. Not less than 75 per cent of all cars now depend entirely on battery current for ignition, while only four years ago the proportion was only 11.9 per cent. The so-called closed circuit systems (magneto type interrupters, and open circuit systems (vibrator type interrupters) are so far on about even terms. Vacuum fuel feed is now found on 71 per cent of all models.

For quite a number of years the cone clutch held its own against the onslaughts of the disc clutch. It was entirely satisfactory in service and its simplicity and low cost of construction seemed to insure it a permanent place in the lower priced class at least. One current tribulation since, however, that it is declining in popularity.

While no attempt has been made to divide the disc clutches into lubricated and dry types, it is known that the latter are in the majority. It is possible that the dry disc clutch lends itself to specialized manufacture better than the cone clutch; or, again, the growing scarcity of good leather may have shifted the advantage to the side of the asbestos-fabric clutch.

Except for a few cars with friction transmission, bevel gear drive is now universal in pleasure car practice. Straight tooth bevel gears are used mainly on the cheaper cars and helical bevel gears on the higher priced, though the latter is already found on more than two-thirds of all the models. There is not much change in respect to rear axles, though the semi-floating type has gained somewhat, mainly at the expense of the full floating and less at the expense of the three-quarter floating type. In rear springs there is a notable return to the old simple semi-elliptic type, which are now made as they are practically flat when under load. Automobile engineers seem to have come to realize that a certain amount of spring material when subjected to a certain stress will show the same deflection per unit of load whether the spring is a semi-elliptic, full elliptic or any other type, and under these conditions the simplest construction, of course, is the best. Possibly the semi-elliptic also lends itself better to the Hotchkiss drive than the other forms of springs, and while we have not gathered any figures regarding the use of this drive, we know it to be increasing.

Only nine models out of 145 have transmission brakes, the makes being Simplex, Stearns, Jeffery, King, Liberty, Mercer and Franklin. A combination of internal and external brakes is used on 83.5 per cent of all the models. Nine per cent have expendable brakes only and 7.5 per cent contract-

AMERICAN TRUCKS IN SERBIAN RETREAT

Carried Government Gold and Official Records in Flight From Nish.

When the events of the European war are condensed for future generations, some of the achievements of American motor trucks will still find a place in the tragic story. At nearly every climax, as well as in thousands of less important episodes of the war, trucks made in the United States have figured.

One of the most interesting cases in point that have found their way into print is the following from a magazine writer who was in Serbia during the great Mackensen drive through that unhappy country.

"It was five big Kissel Kars that drove up to the rear of the foreign office in Nish one dark night and took away the records in the first stage of their long trip toward Italy and safety. It was in these American cars also that the government gold and valuable papers left the erstwhile capital.

Over Fearful Roads. The horrors of the roads which they had to traverse in their sad trek through the valley of the river in Novi-Bazar will never be adequately told. In addition to traditional lack of highway care, there had come the autumn rains. Then, during the retreat toward Dibra and Monastir, there came a sleet and snow storm which half froze the morasses, rutted and plowed as they were by thousands of feet and wheels, not to mention the heavier guns.

"When they finally reached the end of the roads possibly negotiable by automobile, the drivers of these trucks ran many of them over a cliff and watched them fall into the gorge below, so that they would not reach the hands of the enemy.

"There is a story, becoming a legend, that all the guns, automobiles, and wagons of the Serbs were destroyed in

this way. It is not entirely true, for during the winter I saw a great number of American and a few French cars which had been merely deserted. They were found by progressive young Bulgarian chauffeurs. It did not take long to repair them and put them into commission. Some of these luckless trucks even aided in pursuing their former owners out of Western Serbia.

"From Monastir to Velea on the Morava river, I came with a party of other Americans in a rehabilitated Fiat, of which the Bulgarians were very proud. We were not so awed by its performance as there were eight punctures suffered in the 100 miles of travel.

Trucks Great Climbers.

"Few of the Americans who spent the summer in Serbia did not know about the climbing abilities of the truck before they left home. When they had seen them lumbering up those hills they quickly learned.

"Many times they passed the boys in smaller machines, although their longer wheel base frequently made them halt at turns, reverse and back for a new start. They worked to the last."

ROADSTER REPLACES THE ARMY CHARGER

Light Automobiles Being Used on Border Instead of Horses.

Oakland roadsters now are taking the place of the picturesque charger along the Rio Grande, where more than 100,000 militiamen are camped. Just as the mule-drawn wagon train has given way to the column of heavy motor trucks, so has the mounted officer's place been taken by the high speed roadster.

In San Antonio, Tex., which is a base of supplies for a large number of militia units, there are twenty Oakland roadsters in the Government service. They perform the work that was done by horses when mules instead of gasoline were the motive power for the supply trains.

The quartermaster's corps of an army is divided into companies, as is the infantry, and many of these are truck companies. They consist of several

motor trucks and their crews of drivers and mechanics. A supply officer is in command of each company. It is his business to see that all his trucks stay in column and attend to the other duties of the commander of any army unit.

It was impossible to use a horse, heretofore always the commander's means of travel, because no horse could keep the pace set by the trucks. So the Government experts looked around to light motor cars for the work. After several tests they selected the Oakland roadster.

Acting as "charger" for a supply officer to thousands of hungry soldiers is not play work for a motor car. Texas roads are as bad as Mexico's, and when occupied by a truck train there is little room for the captain's roadster to run along them. The twenty Oakland roadsters to climb arroyos and washouts and travel along divides at an angle of 45 degrees. And they are doing it.

Bragged Too Much.

CLEVELAND, Ohio, Nov. 15.—Walter Fleisher bragged in court that he could operate his automobile on \$1 a week. "A high-cost-of-living expert—\$20 a week alimony," was the judge's answer.

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